

# OUR VOICES, OUR RIGHTS

## WHAT OLDER PEOPLE SAY ABOUT THE NORMATIVE ELEMENTS OF THEIR RIGHT TO AUTONOMY AND INDEPENDENCE

### NEPAL



Older people in Nepal value their autonomy and independence and want to see their right to this officially recognised by their government or the United Nations.

This is the main finding of a consultation held from December 2018 – January 2019 with 100 older people. Participants were asked what they thought about different aspects of autonomy and independence. The findings presented here aim to capture their views. They are not intended to be representative of the population of older people as a whole.

#### ABOUT THE PARTICIPANTS



100 in total:  
67 women  
33 men



90% urban  
5% rural<sup>1</sup>



67% with disabilities

#### Deciding where and with whom to live

Seventy per cent of participants said having the freedom to decide where and with whom to live was very important or important to them. It was important for their 'happiness' and 'dignity'. They could 'be surrounded by loved ones' and live without 'pressure' or 'control' from someone else.

*'It makes people happy and [gives] self-satisfaction. However, coming here [a residential care facility] is not what I wanted but I was alone and didn't have much choice.'*  
69-year-old man

#### Making decisions about what matters in life

Seventy-three per cent said having the freedom to make decisions based on their own will and preferences about the things that mattered to them was very important or important. It gave them 'independence', 'dignity', 'confidence' and 'self-respect'. It meant they were not 'controlled by others'.

*'Nobody likes to live a life depending on others. People should have freedom to live their life according to their wishes.'*  
68-year-old woman

#### Autonomy and independence in everyday activities and participation in society

Seventy-one per cent said it was very important or important to carry out everyday activities based on their own will and preferences.

This made them feel 'responsible' and 'active'. They could 'get involved in community activities' and 'live proudly and contribute to society'.

*'It feels like being in prison when someone controls us.'*  
65-year-old woman

#### Deciding about care and support services

Seventy-four per cent said it was very important or important to make their own decisions about their care and support, including planning ahead for future support. They would not have 'to rely on others' or 'be dependent'. They could 'enjoy life without restrictions' as 'nobody wants to live under someone's control'.

*'If I can be involved in my support services, I will respect myself.'*  
62-year-old man

### Supported decision-making

Sixty-six per cent said it was very important or important to have access to support for making decisions about their care and support.

Ninety-one per cent said it was very important or important to have a trusted person or persons to support them in decision-making about their care and support.

Fifty-nine per cent said it was very important or important to have the opportunity to issue advance instructions about the kind of medical care or treatment they wanted to receive in the future.

### Deciding about palliative care

Fifty-six per cent said it was very important or important to decide for themselves, with support if necessary, the type of palliative care they would receive if they needed it.

*'I can decide for myself without depending on others.'*  
*84-year-old man*

### Overall response by gender

Men value their autonomy and independence more highly than women. On average, 90 per cent of men and 60 per cent of women said it was very important or important to them.<sup>2</sup>

### Official recognition of rights by the government or the United Nations

Seventy-three per cent said it was very important or important that their government or the United Nations officially recognise their right to autonomy and independence.<sup>3</sup>

Recognition was important 'to ensure older people's fundamental rights' because 'many older people have not got freedom' and are 'dominated by family, society and community'. Recognition meant they could 'legally claim their right to palliative care' and 'enjoy their freedom to make decisions' and 'not depend on others' to make decisions for them.

*'To be able to live freely despite being older.'*  
*75-year-old man*



Nepal Guido Dingemans/  
HelpAge International



Judith Escribano/  
Age International

1. 3% answered 'Other', 1% 'I don't know' and 1% 'I prefer not to say'.
2. Average based on responses to a number of questions about the level of importance attached to normative elements of the right to autonomy and independence.
3. Average based on responses to a number of questions about recognition of the normative elements of the right to autonomy and independence.

This consultation was funded by Svenska Postkod Stiftelsen (Swedish Postcode Foundation) and conducted by Ageing Nepal  
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